

Chapter Three: Increase Pleasant Activities

In the “Doing More Pleasant Activities” section in Part 1 you identified some activities that you enjoy doing and planned to do a few of them. In this section you will plan a pleasant activity for every day of the week. Start by planning one pleasant activity each day. Once you are able to complete one activity each day, schedule 2, and then 3, activities each day. Every evening before you go to bed, place a check mark next to any activities you did that day and add any activities you want to schedule for the next day. Now let’s see what is new with Mr. Jones and his pleasant activities. On pages 31 and 32 you can see how Mr. Jones filled out his schedule. Extra forms are available in the back of Part 2.

After reading through Part 1 of the manual, Mr. Jones realized that he was a lot less active and social than several months earlier. His days were usually spent in front of the TV, where he frequently took naps. He didn’t feel like he had the energy to do much of anything, and he often felt limited by shortness of breath and headaches. Besides, he didn’t feel excited about many activities in the future. He was only getting older, and, as he told Dr. Cort, “I don’t have much I can do in my condition.”

Dr. Cort reassured him that the anti-depressant medication would help him with his energy level and sleep problems. In the meantime he could help himself by increasing pleasant activities. Mr. Jones said that in the past he liked to walk to the park, play with the neighbor’s cat, and listen to radio shows. He had not done any of those activities in the last few months. Dr. Cort recommended that Mr. Jones use the exercises on pages 31 and 32 to plan more pleasurable activities.

When Mr. Jones sat down to do the exercises, it was difficult for him to think of many activities he wanted to do. However, since Dr. Cort said he could repeat the same activities many times, he was able to schedule at least one activity for every day that week. When Dr. Cort called the next week to check on Mr. Jones’s progress, Mr. Jones reported that he had walked to the park one day and listened to his radio show twice. Mr. Jones felt that the activities took a lot of effort and did not do much good. Dr. Cort urged Mr. Jones not to give up yet; he was adjusting to increasing his activity level and his medicine probably would take a few more weeks to work. Dr. Cort praised Mr. Jones; doing some activities was a big accomplishment. He also added that doing part of a pleasant activity, like going halfway to the park, is really important. Mr. Jones agreed that even the short walk was better than staying at home all day. Dr. Cort asked Mr. Jones to schedule an activity for each day during the next week.

One week later Mr. Jones felt he was getting the hang of choosing activities and filling out the schedule, even though he couldn’t always finish everything he planned.

One day while listening to his favorite radio show, the radio host recommended a new novel. The next day Mr. Jones decided he would go to the library to get the book and count that as one of his pleasant activities.

Although the book was checked out, he found another book that looked good. Also, at the library, he ran into Mr. Adams, an old friend from the bingo hall. Mr. Adams suggested they go to bingo together the following week and arranged to pick up Mr. Jones at 6:30 on Wednesday. When Mr. Jones returned home from the library, he added bingo to his schedule of pleasant activities. A week later, Mr. Jones told Dr. Cort that he was starting to feel a bit better. He was also looking forward to a second bingo night the next week. Dr. Cort pointed out that the one small activity of listening to the radio show eventually turned into many pleasant activities: the trip to the library, a new book, an old friend, and two nights of bingo. Dr. Cort explained that this was an example of the positive spiral (see Part 1, page 28). Even though Mr. Jones was showing improvements in his mood, they agreed he should continue to fill out the activity planner for a few more weeks.



Increasing pleasant activities
can improve your mood.

SCHEDULE OF PLEASANT ACTIVITIES (WEEKS 1-2)

1. Every evening before you go to bed, plan at least one pleasant activity you will do the following day.
2. Be specific about what activity you plan to do and when you plan to do it. (Example: walk around the block before lunch.)
3. After doing the activity place a mark in the "check off" box (even if you only do part of the activity).
4. In the comments section write any notes about the activity, how it made you feel, etc.

Reminders:

1. Focus on activities you enjoy. If you do the same activity each day and it brings you pleasure, keep doing it!
2. Acknowledge your attempts!
3. Give yourself credit for all that you do, even if you don't complete the activity or do it exactly like you planned.
4. Reward your successes.

DAY	ACTIVITY	CHECK OFF	COMMENTS
MONDAY Date <u>8/25</u>	1. 4P.M. Walk to park	✓	Went half way because leg was sore
TUESDAY Date <u>8/26</u>	1. Go to library for one hour before lunch	✓	Disappointed - Book I wanted was checked out
WEDNESDAY Date <u>8/27</u>	1. 2P.M. Listen to radio show	✓	Liked discussion

DAY	ACTIVITY	CHECK OFF	COMMENTS
THURSDAY Date <u>8/28</u>	1. 4P.M. Play with neighbor's cat		Couldn't find him
FRIDAY Date <u>8/29</u>	1. 2P.M. Listen to radio show	✓	Very interesting show. I'll listen again next week.
SATURDAY Date <u>8/30</u>	1. 1P.M. Watch game on TV	✓	They Lost!
SUNDAY Date <u>8/31</u>	1. 9A.M. Go to church	✓	Very good sermon. Nice Bonus - My daughter came with me.

Note: Additional blank schedules for 1, 2, and 3 activities per day are available in the Extra Forms section.

Summary

1. People who feel depressed tend to do fewer pleasant activities than usual. This contributes to a low mood.
2. Not doing pleasant activities can have a “snowball effect” on your mood, making you feel worse.
3. Increasing pleasant activities improves mood.
4. Focus on increasing pleasant events in your life by making a schedule and keeping a log. The simple act of writing down your activities probably will help you stick to them. Keeping a log will show you the progress you are making.
5. If you want ideas for increasing pleasant activities, refer to p. 32 of Part 1 (Activity Ideas List).

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DAY	ACTIVITY	CHECK OFF	COMMENTS
MONDAY Date _____	1.		
TUESDAY Date _____	1.		
WEDNESDAY Date _____	1.		

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THURSDAY Date _____	1.		
FRIDAY Date _____	1.		
SATURDAY Date _____	1.		
SUNDAY Date _____	1.		